AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the specification beginning at page 5, line 14 as follows:

In particular, the inventors have found it preferable that, in the vicinity of the fused point between the first and second optical fibers, each of the maximum value of the ratio of change in the first mode field diameter $(D_1(L_1) - D_1(L_2))/(L_2 - L_1)$ between given two points respectively separated by distances L_1 and L_2 ($> L_1$) toward the first optical fiber from the fused point between the first and second optical fibers and the maximum value of the ratio of change in the second mode field diameter $(D_2(L_1) - D_2(L_2))/(L_2 - L_1)$ between given two points respectively separated by distances L_1 and L_2 ($> L_1$) toward the second optical fiber from the fused point between the first and second optical fibers be 4.0 ~~μm/nm~~ μm/mm or less.

Please amend the specification beginning at page 19, line 16 as follows:

Namely, in each of the first and second optical fibers 10, 20, there is a position where the difference between the mode field diameters before and after the fusion-splicing becomes 0.1 μm or less within the area where the distance L from the fused point 30 is 5 mm or ~~less~~ more (expressions (1A) and (1B)). Between the position where the distance L from the fused point 30 is 2 mm and the fused point 30, the average ratio of change in mode field diameter is 1.5 μm/mm or less (expressions (1C) and (1D)). Between the position where the distance L from the fused point 30 is 3 mm and the fused point 30, the average ratio of change in mode field diameter is 2.5 μm/mm or less (expressions (1E) and (1F)).

Please amend the specification beginning at page 20, line 16 as follows:

Here, in each of the first and second optical fibers 10, 20, there is a position where the difference between the mode field diameters before and after the fusion-splicing becomes 0.1 μm or less within the area where the distance L from the fused point 30 is 5 mm or ~~less~~ <u>more</u> (expressions (2A) and (2B)). Between the fused point 30 and the position where the distance L from the fused point 30 is 2 mm, the average ratio of change in mode field diameter is 1.0 μm/mm or less (expressions (2C) and (2D)).

Please amend the specification beginning at page 21, line 3 as follows:

Here, in each of the first and second optical fibers 10, 20, there is a position where the difference between the mode field diameters before and after the fusion-splicing becomes 0.1 μm or less within the area where the distance L from the fused point 30 is 3 mm or ~~less~~ <u>more</u> (expressions (3A) and (3B)). Between the fused point 30 and the position where the distance L from the fused point 30 is 1 mm, the average ratio of change in mode field diameter is 1.5 μm/mm or less (expressions (3C) and (3D)).